

POLLING PLACE QUICK REFERENCE GUIDE



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Polling Place Situations

Identifying Voters at the polling place (<https://sosmt.gov/voter-id/>):

Montana permits voters with a wide variety of options to identify themselves for voting purposes. A voter may identify themselves by presenting any **one** of the following government-issued forms of identification:

- √ Montana Driver's License,
- √ Montana state identification card issued pursuant to 61-12-501,
- √ Military Identification card,
- √ Tribal photo identification card,
- √ United States Passport, or
- √ Montana concealed carry permit.

Similarly, a voter may identify themselves by presenting any combination of identification forms that meet the following criteria:

1. Any other form of **photo ID showing the elector's name**,
(For instance, a ski area season pass, health club membership card, school enrollment card, or shopping membership card, etc., so long as the identification contains both the elector's name and photo)

AND

2. A current utility bill, bank statement, paycheck, government check, or other government document that shows the elector's name and current address.
(For example, a voter registration confirmation card, vehicle registration, WIC documentation, etc., that contains the elector's name and address)

Note: Montana law and rule provide additional processes for reasonable identification impediments (see Identification section starting on page 93 in the 2022 Election Judge Handbook for information on Polling Place Elector Identification form and Declaration of Reasonable Impediment form).

Electors' ID differs from information in Register is incorrect:

- If the ID provided has information that differs from the information in the precinct register and the election judge determines the information provided is enough to verify the elector's identity and eligibility to vote, the elector may sign the register and vote. The elector must also complete an updated registration form.

Elector did not bring an acceptable form of ID, or the information presented is insufficient to verify the elector's identity and eligibility to vote:

- Allow the elector to return to the polling place with a required form of identification, or
- If the elector is unable to provide the required forms of identification, the elector is allowed to cast a provisional ballot.

Elector's name not in the Register:

- Call the election office to verify whether the elector's name **should** be on the Register:
 - If confirmed and the elector was omitted erroneously from the Register, have the elector complete the *Certificate of Erroneous Omission* form.
 - **Example:** An elector updates their registration address but it was not updated due to an administrative error such as an error in Motor Vehicle Division forwarding a requested change.
 - The elector votes a **regular ballot** in this scenario.
- If the election office cannot confirm the elector was erroneously omitted from the Register, the elector can vote a provisional ballot.
- If the elector chooses **not** to vote **provisionally** at the polls, direct them to the election office or designated location to resolve the problem.

Elector's address in Register is incorrect:

- Have the elector fill out a *Voter Registration* form with updated information and the elector then votes a **regular ballot**.

Register says elector was issued an Absentee Ballot:

- The elector must vote a **provisional ballot**. Inform elector that the **provisional ballot** will be counted only if the **absentee ballot** is not turned in.

A provisionally registered elector appears to vote (status will be noted on the Register).

- If the provisionally registered elector provides required polling place ID and other missing information and the ID and/or information is verified by the election administrator, the elector can vote a **regular ballot**.
- If the provisionally registered elector does not provide a form of required ID or the ID number or other missing information cannot be verified by the election administrator, the elector may vote a **provisional ballot**. Inform the elector that

the **provisional ballot** will be counted if the elector provides verifiable ID and any applicable missing registration information to the election office by 5pm the day following the election.

An inactive elector appears at the polls to vote:

- An elector can be placed on "Inactive" status for a variety of reasons that are established in law (see MCA 13-2-220, ARM 44.3.2014). These reasons include not responding to correspondence during annual voter list maintenance or having a ballot returned to the election office as undeliverable in a mail ballot election.
- An **inactive** elector may reactivate their registration on election day by appearing at the polls or by requesting an absentee ballot. The elector may vote a **regular ballot** on election day at the county election administrator's office or a central location designated by the county election administrator (which may include the polling place). See [44.3.2015](#), ARM.
- An **inactive** elector should fill out a *Voter Registration Form* if any information in their voter record has changed.

Elector is challenged:

- If a challenge is resolved (see *Resolving Challenges - Special Situations* section of the *2022 Election Judge Handbook*), then the elector may vote a **regular ballot**.
- If the challenge is not resolved, they may vote a **provisional ballot**.

Elector unable to sign the Register:

- Instruct the elector to mark the spot with a fingerprint or another identifying mark like an X.
- Note in the register that you witnessed the elector marking the register.
- If elector is unable to provide a fingerprint or identifying mark and does not have a designated agent, the election judge (or the Election Administrator) may sign for the elector after verifying elector's ID.

Elector requires assistance to vote:

- The polling place is for everyone. The elections process in Montana facilitates voters with disabilities in a variety of ways. Avoid making assumptions about ability. Listen to understand which part of the voting process an elector may need help with.
- Be accommodating and talk with the Chief Election Judge about ways that you can assist electors with disabilities with the voting process.



- The elector may use the AutoMARK™ or ExpressVote®. (See *AutoMARK™ Voting System Setup, Use, and Troubleshooting*, section 4 or *ExpressVote® User Guide*, section 5, *2022 Election Judge Handbook*.)
- The elector may request the designated assistance of an individual to aid the elector in the marking of the elector's ballot, with a few exceptions.
 - The individual chosen **may not** be the elector's employer, an agent of the elector's employer, or an officer or agent of the elector's union.
- An individual designated to assist the elector shall sign the individual's name on the precinct register beside the name of the elector assisted.
- A properly designated agent may assist the elector with the voting process in a variety of ways.
- The elector has the option to be assisted by two election judges who represent different parties. The elector and assigned judges will complete the “Oath of Elector Needing Assistance within Polling Place” form (see bottom half of “*Oath of Elector Unable to Enter Polling Place*” form).
 - If election judges who represent different political parties are not available, the chief election judge shall appoint two election judges to assist the elector (MCA § [13-13-119](#)).
 - The judges appointed must make a notation on the voter’s signature line in the Register and file the signed *Oath of Elector Unable to Enter Polling Place form* in the back flap of the Register binder.
- If an elector has difficulty entering the polling place, they may cast their ballot by requesting that a ballot be delivered to the elector outside the building where the polling place is located.
 - After identifying the disabled voter and confirming registration status, the chief election judge shall appoint two election judges (representing different political parties, if possible) to take the ballot to the elector.
 - The elector must sign the *Oath of Elector Unable to Enter Polling Place* form.
 - The judges appointed must make a notation on the voter’s signature line in the Register and file the signed *Oath of Elector Unable to Enter Polling Place form* in the back flap of the Register binder.

Elector makes a mistake on the ballot (see “Special Situations” section in 2022 Election Judge Handbook):

- Ballot judge will write “spoiled” on stub and the elector will write “spoiled” on the ballot.
- Judge will remove stub and elector places spoiled ballot in an envelope marked “Spoiled.”
- Instruct poll book judge to mark poll book accordingly for the spoiled ballot number. The word “SPOILED” must be marked beside elector’s name for that ballot number in the poll book.
- Give elector a new ballot and state to the poll book judge what the new number is for the ballot.
- **DO NOT** place stickers or labels to cover up and correct errors on the spoiled ballot. Additionally, **DO NOT** provide stickers or labels to electors to place on their ballot.

A ballot is missing or blank:

- If the next sequential ballot is missing, the poll book judge will note it by writing “missing” next to the number in the poll book.
- If the ballot is missing a number due to misprint, fold it and place in a “Spoiled” ballot envelope. Place it in the ballot box with the stub attached. Verify the next ballot has the correct sequential number. If not, repeat the steps above for that ballot.

Elector brings a voted Absentee Ballot to drop off at the polls (see *Absentee Voters at the Polls* section of the 2022 Election Judge Handbook):

- Electors can drop off **absentee ballots** at any polling place in the county that issued the ballot.
- On election day, electors may return ballots to the election office or any polling place in the county where the elector is registered to vote. For school districts, ballots can be returned to any polling place in the school district.
- **Absentee ballots** dropped off at the polling place must be sealed in a secrecy envelope and an affirmation signature envelope. The signature envelope must be signed and dated by the elector.
- An **absentee ballot** dropped off at a polling place other than the one in which the elector appears on the register must be:
 - Delivered to the election office for signature verification and tabulation if tabulation of **absentee ballots** is done at a central location or as directed by

the Election Administrator.

- Delivered to the election office for signature verification. The ballot will then need to be delivered by the election office to the correct precinct if all counting is done at the precinct location or as directed by the Election Administrator.

An Elector asks about Write-In Candidates:

- The Election Administrator will provide the chief election judge at each precinct a list of declared write-in candidates, along with copies of the filing form with name variations. The list may be shown to any elector who requests the information. Lists must **not** be posted in the polling place or in a voting booth.
- The Election Administrator will provide copies of filing forms listing name variations to ballot tabulating judges.

Elector requests ballot be hand-counted:

- When the elector returns the voted ballot, remove the stub, and place it in the stub container. Return the ballot to the elector, have the elector place it in an envelope marked *Hand-Count*, and place in the ballot box.

Poll Watchers:

- A candidate may not be a poll watcher at a polling place where electors are voting on ballots with the candidate's name on them.
- A candidate, family member of a candidate, or worker or volunteer for a candidate's campaign may not distribute alcohol, tobacco, food, drink, or anything of value to an elector within a polling place or a building in which an election is being held or within 100 feet of an entrance to a polling place.
- At the time when each elector signs their name, the register judge shall pronounce the name loud enough to be heard by the poll watchers.
- A poll watcher who does not understand the pronunciation has the right to request that the judge repeat the name.
- Poll watchers can obtain permission from the chief election judge to view the Register during a time that does not interfere with any voting with permission of the chief election judge.
- Poll watchers and observers are entitled to observe all vote counting procedures.

- Poll watchers and observers for early tabulation before the polls close must sign the proscribed affirmation [13-15-207\(4\) MCA](#) and may not disclose results learned prior to polls closing on election day under penalty of law.
- Access to an electronic system containing early tabulation results is limited to the Election Administrator and the elections administrator's designee. Results may not be released prior to the close of polls on election day.
- Poll watchers may challenge any elector using the completed prescribed form.
- Poll watchers and observers may speak to an election judge at a polling place to discuss application or interpretation of election procedures/laws, providing it **does not interfere** with election procedures as determined by the chief election judge.
- Ensure poll watchers and observers are not soliciting information or promoting an issue or candidate to electors in the polling place.
- If cell phones are allowed, poll watchers, observers, and signature gatherers using cell phones should be asked to go to a secluded area or outside the polling place, where electors will not hear the call and will not be distracted. Cameras or other electronic devices should be handled in a similar fashion. The elector must be able to vote in secrecy and without interruption.
- If you encounter an issue with a poll watcher, observer, or signature gatherer, contact the election office.

Questions: Call the local county election office or Secretary of State – Elections Division (406) 444-9608 or (888) 884-8683.

Polling Place Electioneering questions: Call the Commissioner of Political Practices (406) 444-2942.